

proposal through and be used in the decision-making process. Any other proposal must refer to applicable environmental documents (e.g., determination of categorical exclusion; finding of no significant impact; notice of intent to prepare an impact statement), and relevant comments and responses.

(c) *Lead agency arrangements.* If the Postal Service and another Federal agency become involved in a lead agency arrangement for the preparation of an environmental impact statement, the Service will cooperate fully.

§ 775.6 Environmental evaluation process.

(a) *All actions*—(1) *Assessment of actions.* An environmental assessment must be made of each proposed action, except that an assessment need not be made if a written determination is made that:

(i) The action is one of a class listed in § 775.4(b), Categorical Exclusions, and

(ii) The action is not affected by extraordinary circumstances which may cause it to have a significant environmental effect. This part of the determination may be supported by completion of an environmental checklist (referred to as a level I environmental review in the Handbook RE-6) for certain types of categorical exclusions.

(2) *Findings of no significant impact.* If an environmental assessment indicates that there is no significant impact of a proposed action on the environment, an environmental impact statement is not required. A “finding of no significant impact” is prepared and published in accordance with § 775.10. When the proposed action is approved, it may be accomplished without further environmental consideration. A “finding of no significant impact” document briefly presents the reasons why an action will not have a significant effect on the human environment and states that an environmental impact statement will not be prepared. It must refer to the environmental assessment and any other environmentally pertinent documents related to it. The assessment may be included in the finding if it is short, in which case the discussion in the assessment need not be repeated in the finding.

(3) *Impact statement preparation decision and notices.* If an environmental assessment indicates that a proposed major action would have a significant impact on the environment, a notice of intent to prepare an impact statement is published (see § 775.10) and an environmental impact statement is prepared.

(4) *Role of impact statement in decision making.* An environmental impact statement is used, with other analyses and materials, to decide which alternative should be pursued, or whether a proposed action should be abandoned or other courses of action pursued. See § 775.9 for restrictions on the timing of this decision.

(5) *Record of decision.* For actions requiring environmental impact statements, a concise public record of decision is prepared when a decision, or a proposal for legislation, is made. The record, which may be integrated into any other record, or notice, including that required by Postal Service regulations and procedures governing intergovernmental review of Postal Service facility project actions, must:

(i) State what the decision was.

(ii) Identify all alternatives considered in reaching a decision, specifying alternatives considered to be environmentally preferable; identify and discuss all significant factors, including any essential considerations of national policy, which were weighed in making the decision and state how those considerations entered into the decision.

(iii) State whether all practicable means to avoid or minimize environmental harm from the alternative selected have been or will be adopted, and if not, why not.

(6) *Actions prohibited prior to issuance of record of decision.* Until a record of decision is issued, no action may be taken on a proposal on which an environmental impact statement is made if the action would:

(i) Have an adverse environmental impact, or

(ii) Limit the choice of reasonable alternatives.

(7) *Mitigation measures.* Practicable mitigation measures identified in an

environmental assessment must be implemented. Mitigation measures described in an environmental impact statement and accepted in a decision must be implemented. Upon request, the Postal Service informs federal, state, and local agencies and the public of the progress in carrying out adopted mitigation measures.

(b) *Additional requirements for facility actions.* (1) The environmental assessment of any action which involves the choice of contending sites for a facility must be started early in the planning of the action. An environmental assessment report, however, is not required until the contending project sites have been determined. The information contained in the environmental assessment report must be used, together with other site planning information, in the selection of the final site.

(2) When an environmental assessment indicates that an environmental impact statement may be needed for a proposed facility action, a decision analysis report reflecting the results of the assessment is presented to the Capital Investment Committee, and to the Board of Governors if the Board considers the proposal (see 39 CFR 3.4(f)), so that they may decide if an impact statement is to be prepared.

(3) If the Committee or the Board is requested to authorize the preparation of an environmental impact statement, and an analysis indicates that it would be more cost-effective to proceed immediately with continued control of sites, (including advance acquisition, if necessary, and where authorized by postal procedures), environmental impact statement preparation, and project designs, the request will include authorization of funds to permit:

(i) The preparation of an impact statement encompassing all reasonable site alternatives,

(ii) The continued control of specified competing sites (including advance acquisition, if necessary, and where authorized by postal procedures), chosen to preserve environmental or other options, and

(iii) The development of limited designs of facilities for each competing site.

(4) A completed environmental impact statement will be presented to the

Capital Investment Committee, and to the Board of Governors if the Board considers the proposal, for use in deciding whether a proposed project should proceed, be restudied, or be abandoned. If the decision is to proceed with a proposed project, the Committee, or the Board if it considers the proposal, decides which alternative site is to be used for project development, and authorizes the project.

[44 FR 63525, Nov. 5, 1979, as amended at 48 FR 29378, June 24, 1983; 50 FR 32411, Aug. 12, 1985; 50 FR 33036, Aug. 16, 1985; 55 FR 10454, Mar. 21, 1990]

§ 775.7 Environmental assessments.

(a) An environmental assessment must contain:

(1) A summary of major considerations and conclusions,

(2) A description of the proposed action,

(3) For each reasonable alternative, a description of the affected environment, the environmental consequences, the mitigation measures, if any, and a comparison to all alternatives considered.

(b) Those preparing an environmental assessment must solicit information and views from Federal, State, and local agencies and, where there is a substantial likelihood of significant effects on the environment, the public. All responsible views and information must be considered.

§ 775.8 Environmental impact statements.

(a) *Determining scope.* Before an environmental impact statement is prepared, the following procedures must be followed to determine what issues are to be addressed and in what depth:

(1) Affected Federal, State, and local agencies and other interested persons are invited to participate by furnishing written views and information, or at a hearing if appropriate. Notice is given in accordance with § 775.10.

(2) The significance of issues to be analyzed in depth in the environmental impact statement is determined through consideration of:

(i) Actions which are closely related, or similar, or have cumulative significant impacts.